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# Program Implementation Guide for Health Care Organizations

Good Questions  
for Your  
Good Health



[www.npsf.org/askme3](http://www.npsf.org/askme3)

# A Guide to Using Ask Me 3<sup>®</sup> Materials and Resources in Your Organization

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## Introduction

**Ask Me 3** is an educational program designed to improve communication between patients and health care providers, encourage patients to become more active members of their health care team, and promote improved health outcomes.

This Implementation Guide provides tips and strategies for implementing the Ask Me 3 concept and materials into your practice or organization as well as other steps you can take to encourage clear communication.

## Why Ask Me 3®?

If you've ever misheard a conversation or misread directions, you know the pitfalls of written and spoken language. Messages are not always clear, even to those who are normally considered proficient communicators.

Think, then, of the complexities involved in health literacy, which requires not only understanding words, but also following instructions, using numbers, and reasoning. According to the [National Assessment of Adult Literacy](#), only 12% of English-speaking adults in the US are proficient in health literacy. At the same time, those of us in the patient safety field strongly advocate for greater patient and family engagement as discussed in the NPSF Lucian Leape Institute report, [Safety Is Personal: Partnering with Patients and Families for the Safest Care](#). It follows then, that we must identify good, useful tools to help patients become engaged and to help health care professionals communicate more effectively.

**Ask Me 3** is an educational program designed to improve communication between patients and health care providers, encourage patients to become more active members of their health care team, and promote improved health outcomes.

The program encourages patients to ask their health care providers three good questions:

1. **What is my main problem?**
2. **What do I need to do?**
3. **Why is it important for me to do this?**

Through the use of these questions, **Ask Me 3** can encourage patients to become more involved in their health care, organize the provider-patient conversation, focus discussion on the answers to key questions and help patients acquire the information they need to take care of their health.

More information on **Ask Me 3** can be found at [www.npsf.org/askme3](http://www.npsf.org/askme3).

## Implementing Ask Me 3® in Your Organization

There are many ways you can implement the **Ask Me 3** concept and materials into your practice or organization to improve communication with patients. Improved communication can help increase

your patients' ability to understand and act upon the information you provide, ultimately improving their health outcomes.

Here are some easy and productive ways to get started:

- **Educate staff**
  - Convene colleagues and staff to discuss the prevalence of limited and low health literacy, the potential implications for your patients and whether **Ask Me 3** might be a good fit for your organization.
  - Conduct a training for your staff on health literacy using the complimentary educational training slide deck, *Leveling the Challenges of Health Literacy with Ask Me 3*, which is available on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).
  
- **Check your existing points of contact with patients**
  - Review points of contact – written, visual, and verbal – that your practice or organization has with its patients both internally and externally and consider if the language used is appropriate for patients with limited and low health literacy.
  - Create an audit that reflects the specific needs of your practice and its patients. Some of the areas you may want to examine include:
    - How information is provided to patients
    - The reading level of the written materials you provide, such as medication instructions
    - Your protocols for patient follow-up and questions
  
- **Post information about Ask Me 3**
  - Post educational information to raise awareness and encourage patient questions.
  - The **Ask Me 3 poster**, which is available on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#), can be used to stimulate patient interest about the good questions.
    - Consider hanging the poster in the following high-traffic areas:
      - Entrance
      - Waiting rooms
      - Examination rooms
      - Bathrooms
      - Cafeteria
  
- **Share materials about Ask Me 3**
  - Disseminate educational information
  - The informative and easy-to-read **Ask Me 3 flier**, which is available for complimentary download on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#), can educate patients about the good questions and how to use them.
    - Consider sharing the flier in the following ways:
      - Handing it out with any instructions or paperwork at check-in.
      - Conduct a special mailing to patients
      - Distribute and discuss the flier during health fair events
      - Place fliers on tables in the waiting room.
  - Add an item about Ask Me 3 in your newsletter.

- Download the ready-to-use approved language on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).
  - Additional Ask Me 3 materials are available for purchase in the [NPSF online store](#).
- **Show the Ask Me 3 video**
  - Consider adding the **Ask Me 3 video**, which can be viewed on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#), to your internal patient television network.
    - Available in English, with Spanish captioning available, the video shows a patient and his daughter using the Ask Me 3 content in conversation with a health care provider. He asks the three good questions to help get the answers needed to better understand his health condition and how to stay healthy.
- **Discuss Ask Me 3 with patients and families**
  - Encourage health care providers to reference **Ask Me 3** and encourage questions during patient visits.
- **Consider taking additional steps to promote clear communication**
  - A provider's communication skills can directly influence a patient's health literacy and comprehension.
    - Slow down your speech
    - Make visits interactive
    - Limit, and repeat, information at every visit
    - Avoid medical jargon
      - Review *Words to Watch* on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).
    - Use illustrations to explain important concepts
    - Use easy-to-read written materials
    - Use “teach-back” to gauge comprehension
  - For more information, please review *Leveling the Challenges of Health Literacy with Ask Me 3* educational training slide deck on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).

## Complimentary Health Literacy Resources

The **Ask Me 3** website provides various complimentary resources for educating staff and patients about prevalence of low and limited health literacy.

- ***Leveling the Challenges of Health Literacy with Ask Me 3***  
This educational training slide deck provides a substantive overview of the scope and impact of low health literacy, identifies risk factors and red flags, and provides strategies on what providers can do to help patients. It is available for complimentary download on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).
- ***Words to Watch Fact Sheet***  
This document highlights terms commonly used by providers that can be confusing for patients with low and limited health literacy. It provides alternatives that are more familiar and effective. It is available for complimentary download on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).

- **Health Literacy: Statistics At-A-Glance**  
This document produced by NPSF provides an overview of the scope and impact of low health literacy. It is available for complimentary download on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).
- **Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion**  
This report authored by the Institute of Medicine provides an overview of the problems associated with health literacy and its effects in various settings. It is available for complimentary download on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 website](#).

## Complimentary Ask Me 3® Educational Materials

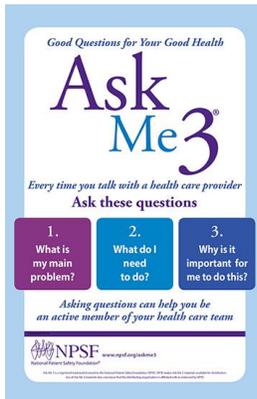
NPSF offers the following easy-to-use complimentary Ask Me 3 educational materials for patients, providers and health-concerned organizations. All materials are available in English and some are also available in Spanish.

### Flier



This informative 2-page **Ask Me 3 flier** helps educate patients about the program and encourages them to ask their health care providers the three good questions to more effectively manage their health. The flier is available in both English and Spanish and can be downloaded on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 webpage](#) and printed on 8.5 x 11 paper.

### Poster



The **Ask Me 3 poster** can be used to introduce patients to the program. Hanging this poster in waiting rooms, lobbies, and/or exam rooms can help familiarize patients with Ask Me 3 and remind them to use the three good questions during interactions with health care providers. The poster is available in both English and Spanish and can be downloaded on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 webpage](#). and printed on 11 x 17 paper.

### Video



Available in English, with Spanish captioning available, this **Ask Me 3 video** shows a patient and his daughter using the good questions in conversation with a health care provider. The video can be viewed on the [NPSF Ask Me 3 webpage](#). Please contact NPSF if interested in showing the video in your practice or organization.

## Additional Ask Me 3® Educational Materials for Purchase

NPSF offers additional Ask Me 3 items for purchase in the [NPSF online store](#). Most materials are available in English and some are also available in Spanish.

### Pens



These pens are a helpful reminder for patients to ask their health care providers three good questions. These pens are white with a blue clip and have "Ask Me 3 Good questions for your good health" imprinted on them. The pens are available in English and can be purchased in the [NPSF online Store](#).

### Key Tags



These compact, 2-sided, full color **Ask Me 3** key tags are a helpful reminder for patients to ask their health care providers three good questions. The key tags are available in both English and Spanish and can be purchased in the [NPSF online store](#).

### Note Pads



These **Ask Me 3 note pads** are a handy tool for patients when talking with their health care providers. The note pad includes the three good questions, space for patients to write the answers they receive to each of the questions as well as additional notes. The note pads are available in English and can be purchased in the [NPSF online store](#).

### Buttons

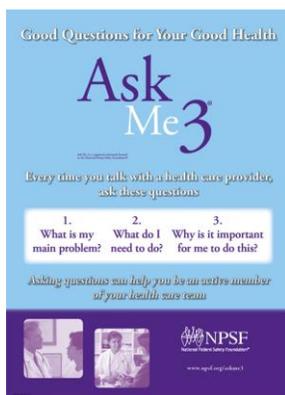


The **Ask Me 3 buttons** can be worn by health care providers and staff to remind patients to ask the three good questions. The buttons are available in English and can be purchased in the [NPSF online store](#).

## Brochure



This informative 8-page **Ask Me 3 brochure** helps educate patients about the program and encourages them to ask their health care providers the three questions to more effectively manage their health. It also provides a tear-out **Ask Me 3** reminder checklist as well as a form for listing their current medications and a reminder page for taking notes during their visit. The brochure is available in both English and Spanish and can be purchased in the [NPSF online store](#).



The **Ask Me 3 poster** (16 x 22) can be used to introduce patients to the program. Hanging this poster in waiting rooms, lobbies, and/or exam rooms can help familiarize patients with Ask Me 3 and remind them to use the three good questions during interactions with health care providers. The poster is available in both English and Spanish in both English and Spanish and can be purchased in the [NPSF online store](#).

## Ask Me 3® Cobranding Opportunities

Organizations interested in customizing various Ask Me 3 materials with their organizational logo are invited to enter into a formal Ask Me 3 cobranding agreement with NPSF.

The fee for cobranding varies based on intended distribution (see chart below) and includes complimentary production-ready materials.

Ask Me 3 Per-piece Cobranding Fees	
Quantity to be distributed	Fee
5K	\$500
10K	\$1,000
15K	\$1,350
25K	\$2,000
50K	\$3,500
more than 51K	Contact NPSF for pricing

For more information on cobranding opportunities and/or to discuss next steps, please [contact us](#).

Note: Members of the NPSF Stand Up for Patient Safety program receive the right to cobrand Ask Me 3 materials as a member benefit. For more information about the Stand Up for Patient Safety program please visit the [NPSF website](#).

## Other Information

Please contact NPSF with any questions related to the Ask Me 3 program and materials at [info@npsf.org](mailto:info@npsf.org) or (617) 391-9900.

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NPSF provides, through a non-exclusive, non-transferable license, certain Ask Me 3 materials and resources for download and distribution free of charge to aid in the promotion of health communication, including health literacy, and increased patient safety.

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